



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

JOHN G. ROWLAND  
GOVERNOR

March 1, 2004

Congressman Christopher Shays  
1126 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-0704

Dear Congressman Shays:

I am in receipt of your letter suggesting a significant increase in the state's gasoline tax in order to make further investments in the Metro-North Railroad Line. While I appreciate your recommendations, I have already moved forward with a state action plan to address both the short and long-term needs of our rail system.

Last week I directed an expedited purchase of rail cars and locomotives to bring immediate improvements to the commuter line. This action accelerates the original plan by about a year, and has been accomplished without depleting funds available for other important transportation initiatives throughout the state. I am also able to take this action in a way that avoids the harmful effects of a gas tax hike – a tax that I, and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, worked hard to reduce to assure that Connecticut remains economically competitive.

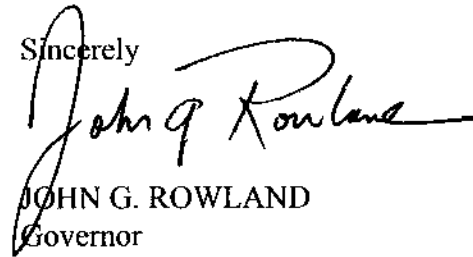
Last week I also directed that a fresh look at the longer term equipment needs of our commuter rail service be taken in order to upgrade our state's three decade old fleet. I specifically called for updating our needs assessment, developing a schedule for procurement, and conducting an assessment of costs and funding options. These activities are being conducted over the next sixty days by my Office of Policy and Management and the Department of Transportation.

The state's commitment to transportation spending has grown each year since I have taken office. In addition, special attention is being paid to the recommendations of the new Transportation Strategy Board, with almost \$120 million in new commitments to their initiatives alone.

While I appreciate your attention to raising taxes on Connecticut residents, I would encourage you to focus on the federal Transportation Act's Reauthorization. My greatest concern at this time, and my request of you, is to assure that Connecticut's share under the federal Transportation Act's Reauthorization meets our state's needs. As it stands now, Connecticut is facing a very unfavorable return rate under the proposed legislation and this will have a huge impact on the state's ability to address all of our transportation concerns. I urge you to work with your colleagues on both sides of the aisle so Connecticut does not get left at the station.

I trust that you will do all that you can to improve our standing. Thank you.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John G. Rowland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JOHN G. ROWLAND  
Governor